

Conversation with 68 year old white male and 45 year old white male, Ewell, Maryland (part 1 of 2) (Transcription)

B: Tell me where you were born and how long you've lived there.... or here. Have you lived in Ewell all your life?

E: Uh huh...no, we lived at Tylerton, the other community, what..three years...but we lived on Smith Island.

B: How old were you when you lived in Tylerton?

E: That's where I was born.

B: Oh, you were born in Tylerton.

E: We lived there till I were three...then we went to Baltimore for a year during the war come back..been here ever since.

B: Do you remember being in Baltimore?

E: Yeah,

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B: Oh, do you? You were pretty young.

E: I remember singing (just remember Pearl Harbor).

B: Oh, is that right.

E: What...it was nineteen forty one or two.

B: Oh, so you didn't start school then till you were on Ewell.

E: Huh uh..I went to school whole time here...only high school in Crisfield.

B: Oh, now were you one of the group that had to go over and <stay?> over?

E: Yeah.

S: Who did you stay with? How did that work?

E: I, uh..for two years I stayed with this insurance collector. Used to come around here..and we'd go over Monday mornin...walk down there with our suitcases..stay all week long..walk to school..no bus..

B: How far did you have to walk?

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E: Maybe...mile and a half...more...bout a mile and a half..or two mile. And sometimes he'd pick us up, when he could, but if (he wasn't home)..you know, be away collecting insurance or something...

B: How about, now, did you go to high school?

W: Uh um..

B: But you did go to school here?

W: Seventh grade was my limit.

B: Here on Smith?

W: No, Tylerton, that's where I was born.

B: Oh, you were born in Tylerton.

W: Yeah, that's where (we were)...I was....

E: Most of the <unintelligible text> come from Tylerton.

B: Well, yeah...are you related to <unintelligible text>

E: Yeah, some.

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W: Well, I don't know what you'd call us...second or third cousins.

B: Some distance...

W: Me and his mother is cousins. Me and <unintelligible text> his mother is cousins..
<unintelligible text> and we're cousins.

B: I bet the <unintelligible text> name goes back to the original settlers.

E: It does

B: Does it? Do you know?

E: Uh huh, his name was..well we go back to the eighteen eleven one..one of our
grandfathers was born..Down on that <unintelligible text>.

B: <Shanks?>?

E: Uh huh, that's near Virginia, right over the line..in Virginia.

W: It's called <unintelligible text>.

B: <unintelligible text> Isand..and were they some of the same people who settled here?

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E: Right..because he was in that first line dispute between Maryland and Virginia. He was one of the witnesses in that so.. it's a book with his name in it and his testimony in it. telling when he was born and stuff..

B: Now that was your great-grandfather?

E: Well..I don't know...he's my father, his name is Watson..

W: It was his great great grandfather ...

E: More than that..my grandfather's name was Watson...great grandfather's name was <unintelligible text>...my great great grandfather's name was <unintelligible text> ...

W: <unintelligible text>.

E: <unintelligible text>.. It was third great grandfather .. it was him .. he was down there ...

B: Oh, it was great great great grandfather..

W: Yeah...

B: Oh, good.

E: He was born down there in eighteen eleven. So we were here before eighteen ... we were here in the seventeen hundreds.

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B: Wow, was the same school that you went to on Ewell, or on Tylerton, was that the same school that...that's not the school dthat's there now..or the same building?

W: No, no....we went all around to schools.

B: Oh, is that right?

W: See, Tylerton..I'll tell you about Tylerton..you've been to Tylerton, haven't you?

B: Just once, just for overnight..

W: Well, way it used to be when you went into Tylerton, first place was called Long Branch. It was about twenty <four?> families lived there. Then inbetween there they was a <unintelligible text> went all the way over to Tylerton ..then in inbetween there was a place called Johntown It was ... that's where the church used to be and the school used to be and used to be about five or six families lived right there in the little community, there...And then...then further over you get to the bigger part of Tylerton why that was another little place there ... it was called Johntown and that was about seven families lived there .. and then you crossed the bridge and you got on the main part of Tylerton...see there were people ...see there was people scattered everywhere...

B: So, a lot of those places where there were houses don't exist anymore?

W: No, no, they all moved to Tylerton..on Tylerton, right on..the church and everything.

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E: <>>>>>>? used to be everybody had their little patch of high land and rose their vegetables...

B: Where it was above the marsh?

W: Yeah, yeah...

E: See this...that was...that one I was tellin you about .. he was a big boat captain, on one of those big sailboats... and that was on his flagstaff..

B: Oh, that's wonderful. how old is it..

E: Since eighteen hundreds?

B: Since the early eighteen hundreds....oh my, what's it made of?

E: Bronze, I think..

B: Is it bronze? Oh, that's beautiful..isn't that? What a treasure. I mean, really it is for you to have that from the...

W: See they used to have big schooners here. They couldn't even bring em in ...they couldn't even bring them in these cricks..they'd have to anchor off here you know when you come in from Crisfield...the first part right out there it's called the back...it's called the

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Cove. And then down below Tylerton it's called Horse (.....) <Diton?>. They couldn't bring none of them big boats there. They <unintelligible text>

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that.

B: Now, how did you find out about your great, great, great grandfather?

E: My aunt told me a lot of it. My grandmother..great grandmother, she told me.

B: Did they have records of that or bibles or something?

E: There's a bible with the dates of the births and stuff in it. And then, this one testimony I was tellin you about, when Maryland and Virginia had a controversy over the state line, he was one of the witnesses to the hearing over the state line.

B: I was reading something about that where somebody in Virginia wanted to push the line North or something is that what you're talking about?

E: They still going on...They broke it up this summer.. You know, they could crab in Virginia, we couldn't. We live right on that line..made a mess. But when they moved it one time, he was one of the witnesses and it told about , I don't know where the book is now, but it told about when they stepped it off with a chain, you know, a surveyor come from the mainland and they stepped the line off with a chain, just walkin.

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B: Huh, and he was a....

E: He was a witness to the hearing bout where the line were supposed to be.

B: So that, now that's the earliest time that I've met anybody has had any information for me about, but I'm sure there were people on the island before that, you know, living here, yeah?

W: Yeah.

E: Yeah, we was supposed to be settled in sixteen fifty four.

B: I just wonder when...I guess to say it was settled then <unintelligible text>..

E: Well, I had <unintelligible text>

B: Oh, is that right...that's great...

E: And all that kind of stuff.

B: I'm gonna have to find some written documents..

E: Gallons of molasses..

B: NOW, I saw the picture in the other room of....I can't remember the name of her now..

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(the Minnie Estelle)

B: The Minnie Estelle...that was your...

W: Yeah, there she is right thar..

B: That was your boat, right?

W: That was my boat. I've had four or five boats.

B; Is that right?

W: Yeah, I had...the first boat I had was named the Russell.

B: The Russell?

W: Uh, huh..

B: what Kind of boat was that?

W: She was a big power boat like that..But it...I traced watermelons to Baltimore from North Carolina...

B: Oh, so you used...from North Carolina..you went all the way down there?

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W: Yeah, clear to Edenton, North Carolina.

B: So you used it as a freight boat.

W: Freight boat, yeah.

B: Did you ever do oysterin on the...

W: I done it for about two months, didn't I?

(he wasn't a catcher, Becky, he was a freighter)

W: I was always a freighter. I forgot how I got out of it, but, her brother needed a man so I filled in for him.

<unintelligible text>

for about two months. I don't like that job.

B: Actual on one of the <dreage?> boats?

W: Yeah, on one of them skipjacks.

B: Oh, yeah, they're beautiful boats. Take a lot of abuse.

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W: Yeah, it's backbreakin on them.

B: I bet. What, you work on the water now, right?

E: Uh huh. I've got a big boat like that too.

B: Oh yeah...what do you do now. How do you earn your livin'?

E: In the winter I buy oysters and sell them and in the spring I catch seed oysters for the state. And in the summer I find oyster shells. I just got through last week and railway my boat this week. ..painted her up. And I don't do nothin now till September..crab a little bit maybe for fun. I start back in Septemeber again.

B: Now you say you catch seed oysters? What are they?

E: You see when I buy oysters in winter..ever bushel I buy I have to pay sixty cent tax on the bushel and it goes into a fund in the State and then in the spring you get the privilege of workin back and that pays me back for catchin the baby oysters..and we go in these areas and catch the baby oysters and transplant them. We got areas in the state where they will grow real thick.. they won't get big and they won't get fat so they just trans....let em go like that and transp...try to catch em and then they move em to where they will get good. You get them prime oysters. And then when we get through doin that, we put the shells back in the that area we took the seed out so that the oyster will....they'll catch on you know they're born free and they'll float and they'll catch on another shell but they got to stike on somethin...catch on somethin..and they catch on another shell better then they

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do anything..so we take the shells back from the packin houses and put back in these areas..and let them strike there. Then we move em out.

B: I didn't know they were born free and then they floated. I didn't know.... always wondered about an oyster....

E: They have so many...they float like that then they have so many...so much time and they either get caught on somethin or they get eat up by somethin...not on a piece of wood or a shell or somethin. A oyster shell is about the best thing they...they'll hit the back on these oyster shells.

B: And then do they then start making a substance that adds on to that shell?

E: Uh huh, they grow right out of that shell. You can see where it's stuck to the shells and stuff like that.

B: Huh, I didn't know that. I don't know what I thought..I guess I never thought about an oyster too much. But just had...I had no idea...

E: Well, they spawn...they just spit them right out and they'll float...they've took pictures and stuff of it.. They float free and they goin around there just (.....)

B: So you say they're bisexual so it's the male and the female all in one and so it's formed right inside the shell?

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E: Yeah. Goes from they don't strike after so many hours.. they's so many cays you can see it. It's real thin and flat and then starts spreadin out gettin bigger.

B: Uh huh and this is a boat like that one?

E: It's right down here to the oil...I'm right next to the oil dock. Just painted up...real slick.

B; Oh, I'll have to go down and see her. Or maybe I'll see... Will I see her in the mornin'?

E: When you're goin out, uh huh.

(Look quick cause shes's right next to the oil dock. The J.C. Druer)

B: What kind of other boats did you have?

W: That's all I had...same, I had the same kind of boats. But I've had some small ones and I've had some big ones.

B: What kind of boat...whatwould you call the boat that you had...not the name of it, but the kind.

W: Well, they always called it buy boats. There's some calls em buy boats and some calls em barges.

B: You showed me....they're the ones with the cabin that..

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E: Cabin all the way forward...

W: Yeah, but I had one The Russell, The Virginia May, The Dewey, and the Winnie Estelle and then I bought the J.C. Druer for...

E: Me and dad bought her...

W: me and him bought her together.

B: Oh, you say you bought that one...did you ever have one built?

W: No, never had one built. But the Winnie Estelle, uh, uh, uh, the man built her himself, he had built two of em. He had built one called the Dory Estelle...one called the Winnie Estelle. And he built the Dory Estelle right over here on this Island. She was a great big power boat too. And they named them after his daughter. One daughter...he had two daughters, one named Winnie Estelle and then he had his wife was named Dora and they named the other one Dora Estelle..So I bought her from a feller.

D: Did you always do freighting?

W: Yeah, from a little boy up. When I got out of school I used to freight with em.. I don't know if you seen that picture of that boat on the wall in there...Huh, did you see that one with that sail, you know....

E: Virginia Estelle....

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W: I'll go get that one and show...

(Wait a minute, stay there, stay there, I'll get it..

W: She'll get it...

E: Our family..our family always has..you know, that's what you come up to like. Our family never has been catchers much. They've been more the buyers. On the <unintelligible text> side, not on the <unintelligible text> side.

W: No, I...

E: But we had uncles, grandfather and, you know, he used to have big sailin schooner, a bug eye, didn't he <unintelligible text> grandfather..

B: Oh, I'm glad you said that..what was a bug eye used for?

E: It was used for oysters..for freight...